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ABSTRACT

The steps which should be followed in planning, preparing, and giving a presentation are: (1) start planning immediately; (2) establish realistic objectives emphasizing desired results; (3) analyze the audience and the context of the presentation; (4) prepare a preliminary plan to help in selecting and organizing material including topic, objective, audience, key ideas, and supporting detail; (5) prepare a rough outline divided into introduction, body, and conclusion; (6) review the outline with someone else; (7) dry run the presentation with the edited rough outline, using only brief notes; (8) do the final editing of the outline, prepare final visual aids, and rehearse the final version; (9) keep the presentation simple, straightforward, and brief; and (10) take advantage of questions and discussion to increase impact. This document includes a worksheet for preparing the outline. (DC)

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SPEAKING SUCCESSFULLY

SAN MATEO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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STEPS IN PLANNING, PREPARING AND GIVING A PRESENTATION

I. Start planning immediately for best possible use of time available, especially if given a deadline; *commit yourself* and others to interim checkpoints. Keep these always before you; meet them to build confidence.

II. Establish realistic objectives emphasizing results you desire.

A. Ask yourself, "What do I want to happen as a result of my speech?"
B. Match your own objective to your audience's ability--and willingness--to understand, accept and act.
C. Choose an appropriate combination of "persuade, explain, instruct, and report" to achieve your objective.

III. Analyze your audience and the context of your presentation.

A. What's in it for your audience? Look at your topic from the point of view of their interest in your objective, the possible benefits and disadvantages to them of what you have to say.
B. Consider their previous knowledge of the topic, possible preconceptions or commitments, support or hostility for your objective.
C. Estimate general and specific level of knowledge, technical competence, vocabulary, background and experience.
D. Identify information and techniques most likely to gain their interest and convince them: benefits, technical detail, statistics, costs, case examples, anecdotes, true stories, testimonials, accurate quotes, etc.
E. Think about the time, place, occasion, arrangements and related events.

IV. Prepare a preliminary plan to help you and others select and organize material.

A. Topic: identify the subject of your speech, briefing or presentation.
B. Objective: spell out what you want to happen as a result. Clarify in your own mind objectives you want to announce to your audience as well as "hidden" objectives of your own (example: make a good impression).
C. Audience: summarize your best knowledge and estimate of where they're coming from (remember section II above).
D. Key ideas: focus on the ideas and concepts the audience must accept and remember if you are going to accomplish your objectives.

1. *State* them in conclusion form, preferably as a *complete sentence*.
2. *Check* them to see if they logically relate to the result desired.
3. *Use no more than five*. Your audience can assimilate and carry away only so much. You'll accomplish more by concentrating on a few key ideas and hanging the detail on those points than by bewildering the audience with lots of "points," lots of "detail."

E. Supporting detail: build it for each point, marshall your stories and statistics to drive home those key ideas, build in variety (see section III-D above).

V. Prepare a rough outline, using a three-part strategy.

A. Introduction. Plan it to accomplish two purposes:

1. Gain audience attention. To do this, touch on topic's importance to them, the benefits of what you propose or use a vivid example, illustration or anecdote related to your topic, or cite a statistic

or a series of provocative questions.

2. Preview the key parts of your briefing or presentation: explain how you'll develop your presentation, suggest ways your audience can most easily follow, understand, retain and use the information you'll be covering, indicate whether they'll be handouts, visual aids, a time for questions, a break, etc.

B. Body. Build it around your key ideas, fill it out with supporting detail.

1. Arrange your *key ideas* in the most effective logical sequence for your objective and this audience. Use simple sequences such as order of importance, chronological steps, cause and effect, location, function or any other that makes sense. When all else fails, simply number each point and tell your audience you've got *three* (or whatever) points and go to it.
2. Support each idea with facts, evidence, whatever you have chosen to put it over. Use examples and illustrations freely. Relate them to the audience's experience and background whenever possible, but don't overkill by using flimsy connections.
3. Plan to use visual aids. Select them after you've worked out the information: then choose them to emphasize key points or provide variety and interest to liven up dull information or the middle of a long talk. Don't use too many: you run the risk of them overwhelming your audience and of creating an impression you're hiding behind them.
4. Build in *interim summaries* in long presentations. Use them to remind audience of what you've covered so far (help them keep tract of what's key and what's merely supporting detail) and where you're going next.

C. Conclusion. Carefully plan it. Remember, it's your last opportunity to accomplish your objective. It's your *last word;* use it well.

1. Signal your audience before you start to conclude (by a phrase, by shifting stage position, etc) so that they will listen more carefully.
2. Summarize your key ideas--short and sweet--stressing possible benefits and importance to audience of these ideas.
3. Appeal explicitly for acceptance or specific action as appropriate to your objective.

VI. Review your rough outline with someone else, and if possible, put it away at least overnight before trying to do any reshaping or find editing.

VII. Dry run your presentation with your edited rough outline, using only brief notes.

A. Check content for appropriateness, completeness, obvious gaps, inconsistencies, relative emphasis on key ideas, clarity of supporting detail.
B. Check organization for logical sequence, transitions, impact, change of pace.
C. Check presentation for timing, visual aids, delivery, stage action.
D. Familiarize yourself with the sequence of your material and possible alternative arrangements (to give yourself confidence in case you have to reorganize your presentation on the spot as a result of a shortening of time or a question). Unless exact wording is extremely important (as in a policy statement to the public or press), *don't memorize or*

write your speech out verbatim. You risk coming across as dull, or worse, not coming across at all.

VIII. Do final editing of your outline, prepare final visual aids (keeping them simple, few and pointed) and then dry run your final version no more than once or twice more. If you have little or no time to rehearse, *at the very least run over either your opening or closing.* First and last impressions count and "rehearsing" your opening and/or closing will give you confidence.

IX. Keep your presentation as simple, straightforward and as brief and crisp as possible.

A. Double check arrangements (seating, ventilation, equipment, sound system, lighting, possible distractions) and set yp and check your own equipment, visual aids, notes and anything else you might need "up front."
B. Have your basic organization clearly in mind. Concentrate on your introduction and conclusion. If you preview well (during your introduction), your ideas will fall naturally in place and you'll move through easily.
C. Stand up, face up, speak up. An easy, alert posture gives you best use of your own physical strength and makes the best impression on your audience. Button your coat, keep your hands out of your pockets. Use eye contact to keep in touch with audience and get valuable information on attention, interest, reaction, need for more (or less) detail. Put energy into your voice: it will add interest and increase your feeling of relaxation and confidence.
D. Use an occasional long pause to punctuate your material and give the audience a chance to absorb important points and detail. It will also give you a chance to collect your thoughts, focus your energy. It may seem like hours to you, but the audience welcomes it, finds it natural. People pause when talking with each other; do it when talking to a group--it will give you talk a natural feel.

X. Take full advantage of questions and discussions to increase impact.

A. Determine in advance when you will take questions, let audience know.
B. Arrange either to take them directly or through a chairperson, considering size of group, degree of control you want).
C. Listen carefully so you understand the implication as well as the obvious meaning of the question; then repeat it for all to hear if a large group or a low-volume audience member, rephrasing as necessary and clarifying any ambiguous terms.
D. Evaluate and answer the question in relation to your speech objective, if possible referring back to points covered, examples cited.
E. If you cannot answer, say so, explaining why, suggesting other sources of information, reviewing information you do have that's related. But don't try to bluff: your body and non-verbal messages will give you away.
F. Handle difficult questioners according to your best guess of their need. Recognize the arguer and his point--then go on. Acknowledge the loaded question and give the questioner a chance to get his or her point out. Pick up a word or idea from the windbag and say something like "wish we had more time to go into that, but. . ." and move to another question.
G. Consider opening to questions before your final summary. After tangents, arguments, specialized detail, bring the audience back to your few key points. Have the last word; send them away thinking about your ideas.

ANALYSIS:

PURPOSE *(10 words - to inform, persuade, sell, etc.) (Use to measure results of presentation)*

WHEN WILL IT BE	WHERE	STAGING *(Condition, what can go wrong)*

AUDIENCE MAKEUP *(ie, military or civilian, management or engineering, sponsor or in-house, technical or general public)* *(How Many)*

OPENING

DETERMINE OPENING LAST *(Story, shock, questions, etc - get their attention!)*

BODY

MAIN POINTS

THE THREE MAIN POINTS I WANT TO MAKE ARE: *(One positive statement as each point)*

1.

2.

3.

FIRST MAIN POINT

FIRST MAIN POINT: *(Repeat it)*

1.

REASON I BELIEVE THIS TO BE TRUE *(Only one - Keep it simple)*

EXAMPLES OF THINGS THAT MAKE ME BELIEVE *(OR PROVE)* THAT I AM RIGHT: *(statistics, an experience I or someone else had, research and/or reports, analogies, fictional stories, demonstrations, etc.)*

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

SECOND MAIN POINT

SECOND MAIN POINT *(Repeat it)*

2.

REASON I BELIEVE THIS TO BE TRUE *(Only one - Keep it simple)*

EXAMPLES

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

THIRD MAIN POINT

THIRD MAIN POINT *(Repeat it)*

3.

REASON I BELIEVE THIS TO BE TRUE *(Only one - Keep it simple)*

EXAMPLES

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

CLOSING

SUMMARY - THE THREE POINTS I HAVE MADE *(Repeat them again)*

1.

2.

3.

STATEMENT RELATED TO OPENING THAT WILL TIE PRESENTATION TOGETHER

THE RECOMMENDATIONS I MAKE TO YOU *(or)* THE CONCLUSIONS WE CAN DRAW ARE

THEREFORE THE ACTION I WANT FROM YOU IS AS FOLLOWS | WHEN